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Mexico
Narcotics

MEXICO

OFFICIALS DISCUSS USE OF FORMER DRUG PLANTATIONS LAND

Situation in Chihuahua Criticized

Nuevo Laredo EL MANANA in Spanish 28 Nov 84 Sec A p 3

[Text] Chihuahua, 27 November (EXCELSIOR)--Approximately 1,000 hectares still remaining planted and cultivated with marijuana have been constantly reported by the municipal presidents to the state governor, Oscar Ornelas, who has chosen to assume an indifferent position toward this and other problems which, moreover, have caused a power vacuum and disorder in all sectors.

The municipal president of this town, PAN [National Action Party] member Luis H. Alvarez, claimed that in the Ornelas administration, which will end in a year and a half, there are many high-level public officials who are members of various political parties, giving as an example his nephew, an active PAN member, who has been the private secretary of the governor of Chihuahua for the past 3 and a half years.

With regard to the recent discovery of the enormous warehouses, distributors and processors of marijuana which the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic discovered in Bufalo, Coyame, Aldama and Delicias, he asked emphatically how it was possible that no authority noticed what was happening in those localities.

The investigations of the planting, cultivation, harvesting and trafficking of drugs have revealed that, about a year ago, several Mexicans serving as fronts purchased approximately 200 farms with United States money, paying for them prices far higher than the real prices of the land, which were estimated at between 30 and 100 million pesos.

Subsequently, that land was constantly visited by American citizens aboard helicopters who supervised the work of growing marijuana in the settlements of Satobo, Ojinaga, Largo and Nicolas Bravo, and the municipality of Guerrero, where the nearly 1,000 hectares were discovered.

According to the investigation, the system that they used for growing the drugs, as reported by an official source who declined to be identified for obvious reasons, is the one traditionally used by U.S. drug traffickers; because they plant in one location and transport the drugs to another for processing, storage and distribution.

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The National Union of Migratory Workers' Independent Federation Without Borders, headed by Oscar Ramirez, was another entity which reported the incidents publicly and to the governor, but has never received a response.

As a result of the probes into the matter made by the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, there have also been reports that the farmers are still being held because, when the drugs were seized, several escaped to the northern and southern sections of the country, and many of them succeeded in crossing the border to the United States.

In addition, it was reported that there are some settlements near the U.S. border which have also been virtually abandoned by their residents, because they too had been used for growing marijuana, for example, Ojo de Agua, Santa Lucia and San Isidro.

With regard to the marijuana that is still planted, there are 60 hectares in Sotabo and the result has shown up distributed in Ojinaga, Largo and Nicolas Bravo.

Land to Be Appropriated

Mexicali LA VOZ DE LA FRONTERA in Spanish 27 Nov 84 Sec A p 10

[Text] Villa Aldama, Chihuahua, 26 Nov (EXCELSIOR)--Today, the SRA's [Secretariat of Agrarian Reform] undersecretary of agrarian affairs, Rafael Rodriguez Barrera, announced during a meeting at which the chief of the nation turned over to the farmers three farms on which 10,000 tons of marijuana had been discovered and burned, that, at the instruction of the president of the republic, the cultivated land used for purposes other than the growing of drugs would be appropriated and definitively incorporated into the communal land holdings.

Those farms (the distribution of which was requested by the National Peasant Confederation) are located in the high sierra region of Tarahumara; and the largest of them is the Bufalo, which has an area of 9,650 hectares, turned over today to the Felipe Angeles communal farm for its expansion.

Rodriguez Barrera claimed that although the growing of plants which produce drugs is not a strictly agrarian problem, but rather mainly a criminal one, it does give rise to agrarian action, among other things.

Hence, he noted that the federal government is prosecuting and combating the isolated cases of people who use land criminally for unspeakable purposes, such as drug production; a crime of the "most dangerous" type. Therefore, when the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform learns of such incidents, it will immediately proceed to arrange for the legal means whereby the land, if it is privately owned, may be turned over to requesting farmers so that they might put it to the use it deserves.

He remarked that, in a government action restoring to the land the noble purpose that befits it, communal farmers from Coyame and Felipe Angeles

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received today the documents which vouch for the farms on which drugs had been planted.

The agrarian meeting held in this location is part of the activities carried out by the chief executive during a 24-hour tour of this state, on which he was accompanied by five state secretaries, one undersecretary and Governor Oscar Ornelas, among other officials and authorities.

Rodriguez Barrera commented that, with the measures announced today, the agrarian reform process has a new historic dimension; because it now calls for new methods not only associated with the need to turn over the land with input, basic infrastructure and organization, but also with the complete fulfillment of Zapata's ideal of granting it to those who are really working on it.

He said that the agrarian policy is aimed at complete, integrated, rural development, and stressed that the appropriation of properties on which drugs have been planted will be independent of the penal action prompted by these incidents.

Jose Bernardo Ruiz Ceballos, secretary general of the Chihuahua League of Agrarian Communities, for his part, claimed that it was individuals other than Chihuahuans who were ringleaders in the recent incidents wherein those individuals engaged in growing drugs on large expanses of land.

Farmers Given Land

Nuevo Laredo EL MANANA in Spanish 29 Nov 84 Sec A p 10

[Test] Chihuahua, 28 November (NOTIMEX)--It was announced officially today that, on 30 November, over 140 farmers will take possession of the land expropriated by the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, because it was being used for growing marijuana.

The SRA's representative, Francisco Esparza Lopez, remarked that the area to be turned over (in the municipalities of Aldama and Jimenez) amounts to over 9,600 hectares.

The official explained that, of the 9,000 hectares of land, 5,000 belong to Aldama and will be distributed among 87 farmers; whereas the other 4,000 hectares, in the municipality of Jimenez, would be distributed among the other 53 farmers.

The land had been registered in the names of Tiburcio Garcia, Ezequiel Carrasco, Febronio Carrasco, Luis David Nunez and Carlos Smith; but it had been idle for at least 2 years, insofar as the production of grain and vegetable was concerned.

On the contrary, the land had been used for growing, harvesting, storing, processing and distributing drugs, primarily marijuana, the total volume of which was estimated at over 5,000 tons by the Office of the Attorney General

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of the Republic which, in cooperation with the Army, confiscated the drugs and arrested those responsible.

This operation, associated with "Operation Pacifico," was regarded as the most spectacular carried out by the Mexican authorities.

2909

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